

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of proliferating human chondrocytes comprising:

- 1) collecting human cartilage having perichondrium;
- 2) treating the cartilage having perichondrium with type II collagenase;
- 3) centrifuging the treated cartilage having perichondrium in step 2) to obtain precipitate; and
- 4) culturing the precipitate of step 3),

wherein the chondrocytes and perichondrium are both in the culture, and wherein no non-human animal feeder cells are present in step 4), and further wherein the cells increase to ~~at least~~ 1×10^6 to 5×10^6 cells from 1 cm^2 tissue in primary culture and further increase at least 1000 times in subculture.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the cartilage is auricular cartilage.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
seeding the cultured chondrocytes in a monolayer or multilayer at least once; and
culturing the chondrocytes until a chondrocyte mass forms.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, further comprising:

seeding the cultured chondrocytes in a monolayer or multilayer at least once; and culturing the chondrocytes until a chondrocyte mass forms.

5-6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the cells increase to at least 3×10^6 to 5×10^6 [[,]] cells from 1 cm^2 tissue in primary culture.

8. (Canceled)